

PAYEES ON BENEFIT ISSUANCES

Purpose: This section describes the types of payees and who can be a payee in situations when someone other than the head of the assistance unit is named as payee on the warrant and medical ID card.

This section also defines and describes an authorized representative for the food assistance program.

WAC 388-460-0001 Payee for cash, medical and food assistance benefits.

- (1) Cash assistance may be issued in the name of the following persons:
 - (a) client who is the recipient of the benefits;
 - (b) An ineligible parent or other relative receiving benefits on behalf of an eligible child;
 - (c) A person, facility, organization, institution or agency acting as a protective payee or representative payee for a client;
 - (d) A guardian or agent acting on behalf of a client; or
 - (e) A vendor of goods or services supplied to an eligible client.
- (2) When medical coverage accompanies cash assistance, the medical identification (MAID) card for the assistance unit members is issued in the name of the person listed as payee for the cash benefit.
- (3) For other medical assistance units, the MAID card is issued to the person named as the head of the assistance unit.
- (4) Food assistance benefits are issued to the person named as the head of the food assistance unit.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. A protective payee for cash benefits may be established in many situations

including but not limited to the following:

- a. The head of the assistance unit is an unmarried pregnant or parenting minor; See **TEEN PARENTS**.
 - b. A TANF/SFA parent is in sanction status for not participating in a WorkFirst activity; See **WorkFirst - Sanction**.
 - c. The adult head of the assistance unit has demonstrated an inability to use the cash benefits in a responsible manner;
 - d. A client has been assessed as incapacitated due to a chemical dependency. See **CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY**.
2. A protective payee is not responsible for maintaining client eligibility; that is still the client's responsibility.
 3. Vendor payments are most often done for cash benefits issued under the Additional Requirements programs. See **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (AREN) AND ONGOING ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (OAR)**.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. See the **Protective Payee Handbook** for complete details on the rules and procedures for establishing a protective payee.
2. It is appropriate to refer to the Protective Payee Handbook for further instructions when there is evidence of the following:
 - a. Repeated failure to meet obligations for rent, food and other essentials on behalf of themselves or a child in their care;
 - b. Repeated requests for additional help because of an eviction or shut-off notice;
 - c. A child is not being properly cared for;
 - d. Misuse of alcohol or drugs;

- e. An apparent inability to handle daily affairs.
- 2. It is not appropriate to establish a protective payee when the cause of unpaid obligations is simply insufficient funds or a temporary lack of funds due to an emergency.

ACES PROCEDURES

- 1. When a protective payee has been assigned, notify the client 10 days in advance of the action with letter G01G. This is a correspondence letter. You must add text to the letter giving the following information:
 - a. The basis for the decision;
 - b. The WAC rule governing the decision;
 - c. The name of the payee; and
 - d. The effective date of the change;
- 2. Enter the name, address and phone number of the protective payee on the (AREP) screen. Enter protective payee valid value code [PP] in the AREP type field. ACES sends duplicate notices to the client and the protective payee.
- 3. Create an alert for the date set to review the need for a continued protective payee.
- 4. See the ACES procedures at the end of this section for more details.

WAC 388-460-0005 Authorized representative for food assistance benefits.

An authorized representative is an adult who is not a member of the food assistance unit but has the knowledge and consent of the assistance unit to act on their behalf.

- (1) A responsible member of the food assistance unit can name, in writing, an authorized representative. An authorized representative has authority to:
 - (a) Apply for food assistance on behalf of the food assistance unit;
 - (b) Redeem the food coupon authorization (FCA) card for the unit; and

- (c) Purchase food for the food assistance unit using the unit's authorized benefit allotment.
- (2) A responsible member of the food assistance unit can name, in writing, an emergency authorized representative to transact a particular FCA card when no responsible member is able to transact the card. Both the responsible member of the food assistance unit and the person named must sign the written statement.
- (3) The food assistance unit members are liable for any over-issuance that may result from information supplied to the department by the authorized representative.
- (4) An authorized representative may act on behalf of more than one food assistance unit when approved by the CSO administrator.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. The Application for Benefits, DSHS 14-001(X), may be used to designate an authorized payee, but any written, signed statement may be accepted.
2. A responsible member of the food assistance unit is the applicant, the applicant's spouse, or another member named by the applicant as able to transact business on behalf of all members in the assistance unit.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The authorized representative is usually named by the applicant on the application for food assistance.
 - a. When a written statement naming an authorized representative is presented in person outside of the application or recertification process, check the ID of the person against the record for a match;
 - b. If received by mail, compare the handwriting and signature on the statement with handwritten documents and signature in the record for similarity;
 - c. If in any doubt of the authenticity of the statement, contact the head of the

assistance unit for confirmation;

- d. File the written statement in the case file.
2. When the request is made by an assistance unit member who is not the head of the assistance unit, check the case file for any document showing the ID or handwriting of that person. In this situation it is appropriate to contact the head of the assistance unit to verify that the person naming an authorized representative is a responsible member.
3. Enter the authorized representative's name on the (AREP) screen in ACES. See ACES procedures.
4. Issue a new ID card with the authorized representative's name on it. Tell the client to destroy all other ID cards. See **BENEFIT ISSUANCES** for instructions on issuing a food assistance ID card.
5. Emergency authorized representatives as described in 388-460-0005(2) are not entered into ACES. Document the incident on the narrative (NARR) screen. File the written statement in the case record.
6. ACES does not track for multiple cases using the same authorized representative. If it becomes known that a person is an authorized representative for multiple units and is suspected of misusing clients' food coupons, refer the case to the Division of Fraud Investigation (DFI) using letter ROSI.

WAC 388-460-0010 Food assistance authorized representative--Treatment centers and group homes.

- (1) Residents in group homes may choose to have food assistance benefits authorized as follows:
 - (a) On their own behalf;
 - (b) Through an authorized representative of their choosing; or
 - (c) Through a facility acting as authorized representative.
- (2) Residents in chemical dependency treatment centers are required to have a

designated employee of the facility act as an authorized representative.

- (3) The authorized representative for residents in a chemical dependency treatment center or a group home must:
 - (a) Be aware of the resident's circumstances;
 - (b) Notify the department of any changes in income, resources or circumstances within ten days of the change;
 - (c) Use the resident's food assistance benefit allotment for meals served to the resident; and
 - (d) Maintain enough benefits in the facility electronic benefits transfer (EBT) account to allow the department to transfer one-half of a client's monthly allotment to the client's own account. The client is entitled to one-half of the food assistance benefits when the client leaves the facility on or before the fifteenth of the month.
- (4) When assigning an employee as the authorized representative for residents, a facility accepts responsibility for:
 - (a) Any misrepresentation or intentional program violation; and
 - (b) Liability for food assistance benefits held at the facility on behalf of the resident.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. When a facility acts as an authorized representative for persons in a group home or chemical dependency treatment facility, one person from the facility usually acts on behalf of all the clients in that facility or group home.
2. The Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regulates the facilities in their use of clients' food coupons. The following expectations are listed for information only.

Upon leaving a group home or treatment facility, a food assistance client is entitled to the following from the authorized representative:

- a. The food assistance ID card;
- b. Any untransacted FCA card:
- c. All of the month's food coupons if none has been spent on behalf of the client;
- d. At least one-half of the coupons if the client leaves before the 16th of the month and part of the coupons have already been spent on behalf of the client;
- e. A change of circumstance form, DSHS 14-76(X), with instructions to notify the department within ten days with their new address and other changes.

Any FCA card received after the client leaves the group home or treatment facility is to be returned to the department.

WAC 388-460-0015 Persons who may not be an authorized representative for a food assistance unit.

- (1) A person acting as an authorized representative for a food assistance unit will be disqualified for one year when that person:
 - (a) Knowingly provides false information to the department;
 - (b) Misrepresents the food assistance unit's circumstances; or
 - (c) Misuses the food assistance benefits.
- (2) The authorized representative and the head of the food assistance unit are notified thirty days prior to the disqualification taking effect.
- (3) The following persons may act as an authorized representative for a food assistance unit only with written approval of the CSO administrator and only when no one else is available:
 - (a) An employee of the department;
 - (b) Any person disqualified from the food assistance program because of an

- intentional program violation;
- (c) A retailer authorized to accept coupons;
- (4) A public or private nonprofit organization providing meals for homeless persons may not be an authorized representative under any conditions.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

The head of the food assistance unit may request a Fair Hearing when the person they have named as their authorized representative is disqualified from being an authorized representative. See **FAIR HEARING**.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

In most cases, the disqualification of an authorized representative takes place as the result of a DFI investigation. Use letter G01G to inform both the client and the authorized representative of the disqualification action. State the reason for the disqualification action and the client's right to a Fair Hearing.

ACES PROCEDURES FOR PAYEE/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

1. The (AREP) screen in ACES is used to identify and enter information about the person, agency or facility who will act as the cash benefit payee or food assistance authorized representative for the client. ACES sends various combinations of Notices, Warrants, FCA cards, FS I.D. cards, MAIDS, Income Reports, etc. to the AREP based on the Authorized Rep type entered in ACES.
2. Information on a payee or authorized representative may be entered during Screen [J], Interview [O], Processing [P] or Interim/Historical Change [R]. During screening:
 - a. Enter [Y] in the (Authorized Rep) field on the (CIRC) screen.
 - b. The (AURP) screen will appear after completing the (MEMB) screens for the assistance unit.
 - c. Enter the representative type in the (Rep Type) field. Press <F1> for appropriate valid values. Enter the full name, the address, phone number (if available). <TRANSMIT>. Note: If the Rep Type(s) entered are appropriate

for the type of AU(s) being screened, then ACES will transfer this information to the (AREP) screen which is accessed in the Interview function.

- d. Complete the screening process.
3. A payee or authorized representative may be entered and saved in the system during Interview, Process, or Interim/Historical Change.
 - a. Enter a [Y] in the (Authorized Rep) field of the (ADDR) screen. <TRANSMIT>
 - b. The (AREP) screen will appear for the primary AU. Press <F10> for a list of each AU type, its AU ID, and its AU pointer.
 - c. Enter the correct pointer ID for the AU you need. <TRANSMIT>
 - d. The ACES system allows for nine representatives, accessible by putting a [Y] in the (More) field to get to additional (AREP) screens. For each designated representative, enter the representative type in the (Rep Type) field. Press <F1> for valid values. For each type, ACES lists the notices and benefits which will be sent to the person named. Enter the full name, the address, phone number (if available). <TRANSMIT>
 - e. Repeat the process for each AU as necessary. **Note:** You can have the same or different payee or authorized representative for each AU.
 - f. Only the first AREP listed for that AU will receive benefits on behalf of the client. All other listed AREPs for that AU will receive copies of notices only.
 4. Changes may be made to the (AREP) screen as follows:
 - a. To make a change or add data, place the cursor in the appropriate field and complete the required information or type over existing data. <TRANSMIT>
 - b. To delete data, enter a [Y] in the (Del) field and press <F24>.
 5. When changing, initiating or deleting a protective payee for cash assistance, or disqualifying an authorized representative for food assistance, access the letter option from the (ADDR) screen with <F15>.

- a. Select Letter G01G if no other action is needed or C01G if there is a change in benefits;
- b. Add text to the letter explaining the action;
- c. Cite the appropriate WAC rule;
- d. Inform the client of their right to a Fair Hearing.